



March 2023

## THE “INTERIM” HEAD OWL HOOTS

Burnell Breaker

Greetings WISE Division members!

Winter is slowly leaving and spring is just around the corner. We have 2 more meets scheduled for this season and they are shaping up to have some great clinics. Dave Nelson has done a great job in finding people to present clinics for us. Make sure you thank him! We might have someone to take on the job of finding layouts to visit after our meets. We still are looking for people to take charge of the video library, meets, picnic . . . Our March 19 meet will be at the New Berlin Entertainment Center. Tentatively Dave has 3 clinics lined up for that meet. We also have a model railroad on the east side of Milwaukee to visit after our meet. **Remember to also bring something for Bring and Brag!** Our April 16 meet will be at the Oconomowoc Historical Museum and hosted by the Milwaukee Northwest Model Railroad Club. Their members will present 2 clinics and we will have 1 layout to visit afterwards. We also will have a short membership meeting to discuss the status of the Division and our 2023-2024 schedule. We all are disappointed of the announcement on trainfest.com that Trainfest will not happen in 2023. But they are planning on Trainfest 2024. Read their press release below. We will keep you informed as we stay in contact with Kalmbach Media and Great American Train Shows. We are looking for ideas to attract and retain members to the NMRA

and our WISE Division. If you have thoughts on ways to do this and activities for the Division, let me know at [superintendent@trainfest.com](mailto:superintendent@trainfest.com) and I can pass your comments on to the appropriate person.

Happy Railroading!  
Burnell

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# Trainfest®

America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show

TrainFest was a huge success! Our attendance for the show was 20,557. Thank you to everyone who exhibited, attended, participated, and supported Trainfest 2022, we could not have done it without you. We sincerely appreciate all the positive feedback and suggestions we have received about the show. The next Trainfest is planned for November 2024. Between now and then we will be using all the feedback and suggestions we received to build the best Trainfest possible.

Our goal is for Trainfest 2024 to amaze and delight everyone from the most sophisticated hobbyist to families and kids of all ages. News and details about Trainfest 2024 will first be released on this webpage. The next update to this page is planned for Summer 2023.

Once again thank you for your support.



**Trainfest®**  
America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show  
**2022**



## \$\$\$ *From the Cluttered Desk of the Paymaster*

*Dennis Janssen*

### 6 Medical Deductions You Can Take Without Itemizing

#### Which medical deductions can I still claim with the standard deduction?

Deducting medical expenses can be difficult, because of the required [AGI floor of 7.5%](#). But there are some medical expenses that are deductible even if you don't qualify for deducting medical expenses as an itemized deduction. Deducting these expenses lowers your taxable income, cutting your taxes. Your filing status and number of dependents don't affect these [deductions](#).

Here are a few medical deductions the IRS allows without itemizing.

#### Health Savings Account (HSA) contributions

If you contribute any money to your Health Savings Account (HSA), that acts as a deduction on your taxable income. For 2020, the maximum allowed is up to \$3,550 for an individual or \$7,100 for a family annually. If you're over 55, you can contribute an extra \$1,000 for the year. But if your employer contributes to your HSA, you may or may not be able to deduct those contributions. See [HSAs and Your Tax Return](#).

#### Flexible Spending Arrangement (FSA) contributions

Similar to HSAs, contributing to an employer-sponsored Flexible Spending Arrangement (FSA) means you're contributing pre-tax dollars, and are thus reducing your taxable income. For tax year 2020, the maximum contribution was \$2,750 for each spouse.

#### Self-employed health insurance

If you're self-employed, you can deduct any insurance premiums for you, your spouse and dependents. You can also deduct any premiums for long-term care (LTC) insurance you paid during the year. See [LTC Insurance and Your Taxes](#)

#### Impairment-related work expenses

If you're physically or mentally disabled and require equipment or services to perform your job, you can deduct your expenses. Expenses can include a reader for someone who is blind, a personal assistant, or a piece of equipment necessary to your job. Some expenses may be paid by the employer as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### Damages for personal physical injury

If you're getting a reimbursement for physical injury and expenses from a legal action, you can deduct that amount from your taxes. If you're receiving a settlement as well as reimbursements, the settlement can be taxed but the reimbursements can't. You can't deduct medical costs covered by the reimbursement. See [Deducting Medical Expenses](#).

## 6 Medical Deductions You Can Take Without Itemizing (*continued*)

### Health Coverage Tax Credit

The Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) is a credit that covers 72.5% of monthly health insurance premiums paid by eligible taxpayers. Who's eligible? If you're one of the following, you're eligible to claim the HCTC.

- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Recipient
- Alternative TAA recipient
- Reemployment TAA recipient
- Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) pension payee, if you pay for your own health coverage
- A qualifying family member of any of

The credit is not available for insurance purchased through a [Health Insurance Marketplace](#)

## Clinicians Needed

Probably every one of you has at some point sat down for a visit with another model railroader and told them what you're up to lately. Maybe it was during a WISE Division bus ride, or during lunch at a train show, but whether you realize it or not you were giving a clinic. Well -- why not give that same clinic to the entire Division? Do you have a layout but don't feel comfortable hosting a layout tour just yet? Why not take photos of its highlights and narrate it for us at a meeting? Remember that the less complete your layout might be, the more there might be to learn from it. Are you starting or have you finished a project (track, scenery, detailing a freight car, whatever)? Again, take some pictures, scribble down some notes, and you have just made it into a clinic. Clinics do NOT have to be any particular length. Even just five or ten minutes describing what you've been up to will of interest to your fellow model railroaders. If photography is not something you feel confident about, I can help. This is a hobby about doing -- and our monthly meets are about sharing what we're doing. Every one of you has done something, or knows something, or is working on something, or has acquired something, or has gone somewhere and seen something, that is of interest to others. Contact me, Dave Nelson at [engine1385@aol.com](mailto:engine1385@aol.com) and we can discuss.





# Train School

The Division's first Train School was held at the New Berlin Ale House on January 21, 2023.

The Train School offered participants a glimpse into model railroading; all with the beginner hobbyist in mind. There were demonstrations on benchwork, track laying, scenery, car maintenance, DCC, Wiring and 3D Printing. Our demonstrators were all well versed in their areas and captivated participants with, not only their knowledge, but their passion for the hobby.

Advertising the event proved to be difficult. 10 media outlets were contacted for the possibility of running public service announcement about Train School with no response. Posters and informational packets about Train School were mailed to several hobby shops in the Milwaukee and northern suburbs in the Chicago area to post and distribute to their customers. These promotional items were also available at Trainfest at both the WISE Division and flyer tables. The advertising of the event did not



meet expectations.

Estimates placed 60 – 65 attendees to the Train School, although the presence of a second entrance to the hall made it difficult to establish an accurate count. Overall, Train School 2022 was a fledgling success due to the support of our demonstrators, volunteers, and the WISE Division leadership. The consensus of the division is to present the School again in 2024



Thank you to demonstrators Dave Nelson, Rick Leys, Joe Russ, Steve Miazga, Bob Frey, Tom Mabie, David Poquette, and Jeff King from Southside Trains. Also, our appreciation goes to Mike Slater, David Rohr the Lionel Club of Milwaukee, Mark Hintz and his youth group for their modular layout and Dennis Janssen and Burnell Breaker.



## March 19 Clinics

Dave Nelson

### Clinic Opportunity:1

Many of you have likely visited Ken Thompson's Burlington Northern layout (HO) in South Milwaukee for layout tours (WISE Division, NMRA Regional and National Conventions) or operating sessions. The layout portrays the 50 mile line between Galesburg and Peoria, Illinois, and has been featured in Kalmbach's online "Model Railroader Video Plus" series as well as in the 2019 Great Model Railroads annual magazine. During the Covid pandemic Ken closely studied what British model railroaders have been doing to come closer to prototype standards for track and wheels, and the recent publication of a book featuring the Chicago Burlington & Quincy era for the Galesburg-to-Peoria route has caused a considerable rethinking about his Ken has back-dated his era to 1964, and no longer models the BN era but rather the CB&Q. He has also started to incorporate more prototype accuracy in his trackwork, rolling stock, wheel standards, and timetable-and-train-order operations. He has also been culling freight cars from his collection which are inaccurate models or which do not meet his era or his new standards. Ken will bring us all up to date on the how's and whys for these changes with a "virtual" layout tour that he will narrate. Don't miss this chance to gain an insider's view of one of the most acclaimed layouts within the WISE Division's territory.

### Clinic Opportunity:2

Dave Poquette's layout was also frequently visited during layout tours, but Dave and Bonnie recently moved so sadly his old layout was dismantled and planning for a new layout has begun. Dave has decided to focus on the prototype track arrangements and steam locomotive facilities that served, and were south of, the Chicago & North Western lakefront depot in downtown Milwaukee. His clinic will focus on taking a closer look, at what at the time, was a rarely visited and photographed area and what his plans are for replicating it.

### Clinic Opportunity:3

The clinic for March will be a "Two Railroads You Can Model" feature by Dave Nelson featuring two small steam-era railroads in Illinois: the Hooppole, Yorktown & Tampico and the Galesburg & Great Eastern. These rural railroads were just a few miles long; both interchanged with the CB&Q (different lines) and both featured small locomotives (the HY&T had only one!). Their simple track-work featured relatively few turnouts, yet there was enough rail activity to provide prototypes for the model railroader who wants to change scales, simplify, or needs to downsize radically.

## WISE Membership Development

Hello to all WISE Model Railroaders!

One of the continuing challenges with “restarting” our division has become promoting and achieving active, healthy attendance and participation in our meetings and activities. We are working on this challenge by striving to develop a wider variety of programs and initiatives to appeal to a wide variety of modelers / backgrounds.

The WISE Division has a long-term strong and well-deserved high reputation in the Midwest Region, and in NMRA. In fact, we were one of the very first divisions formed with NMRA! This is reflected in the make-up of our membership roster, which has one of the very highest average age of division members of all NMRA divisions in the nation. And along with this, within our division we possess a broad and deep plethora of practical modeling experience and savvy. We have plentiful modeling resources within our membership.

But frankly, to strengthen and perpetuate our division, what we most need is to recruit and engage new members - young, energetic blood - youth - members of all ages. I’ve found recently that if you go to train stores or model railroad clubs in our area, you will find yourself rubbing elbows with modelers far younger than our average membership age. We need those people! To bring them in to attend one of our meets...

So I would like to put a challenge to you - to everyone: Bring or send your sons and daughters, grandchildren, and your friends, relatives and acquaintances to our next meeting, Sunday March 19 !!

See you there !

Gary Hendrickson  
WISE Membership Development

### A Note from the Editor:

How did I do with this first issue? If I missed something, please let me know.

I’ll try to get the issue out to Burnell by the first of each month. To do this, I need all the submissions by the 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest.

I’m also looking for photos as filler. So, please send everything for the Owl Car to [owlcar@trainfest.com](mailto:owlcar@trainfest.com).

Your Editor  
Cindy Mielke

## Division Leadership

### Executive Committee

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### Division Meetings

#### March:

- Our next Executive Committee meeting is March 8 at the Milwaukee Lionel Railroad Club.
- WISE monthly meet, March 19th, 2023 at New Berlin Entertainment Center, 16000 W. Cleveland Ave, New Berlin

#### April:

- April's Executive Committee Meeting is April 12 at the Milwaukee Lionel Railroad Club.
- WISE monthly meet, April 16, 2023 at Oconomowoc Historical Museum, 103 W. Jefferson Street, Oconomowoc

The WISE Owl Car is published by the Wisconsin Southeast (WISE) Division of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA).

Subscription is free in an electronic format to all NMRA members residing within the boundaries of the WISE Division.

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Please send any comments, information, or editorials to Editor Cindy Mielke via email: [owlcar@trainfest.com](mailto:owlcar@trainfest.com)



# January Executive Committee Minutes

## Wisconsin Southeastern Division (WISE) of the NMRA Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday January 11, 2023  
Location: Lionel Railroad Club & Zoom

Meeting called to order by Burnell Breaker at 7:03 pm

**BOD Present** - Burnell Breaker (Interim Superintendent & Video Library), Dennis Janssen (Treasurer, Paymaster), Robert Niedermann (Interim Asst-Superintendent, & Contests), David Rohr (Secretary, Chief Clerk), Tim Koch – BOD (joined at 7:05 pm),

**Chairs Present** - None

**Guests** - David Mielke (via Zoom, left at 7:26 pm)

**Absent** -

**Minutes:** No changes noted from December 7 meeting, approved

**Paymaster Report:**

No changes noted from December 7 meeting, approved

**Train School:**

David Mielke joined via zoom. The room is \$600 for a portion of the room, not the entire space. The application for the \$200 grant from HQ has been approved. (We anticipate not having a picnic this coming year, as the person that organized it last year has stepped down, and no longer an NMRA member.) Make & Take kits from storage will be handed to participants. We may do a promotion. Fliers for Hobby Shops did not get much attention. We did get some views on Facebook. Planning on having pizza and soda after the event for the helpers. Need to be out of the room by 5 pm. Tim K. is planning on bringing the NCE setup for the DCC presentation.

Mielke discussed that some folks are interested in coming from South Central Division (SCWD) to visit MKE area layouts: Kalmbach, MUT Lines (O Scale club) downtown, NAPM, LRRC, maybe WCGD/Badgerland or others. First part of May or June, for a possible visit. Maybe Rockford would like to join. This would be a weekday event, because of Kalmbach.

It was disclosed that David Mielke's wife Cindy has volunteered to resurrect the Owl Car publication. She will need google doc access, and the Division's subscription to Office 365 which has publisher access. Need to get the info from Jeff (former Owl car editor)

Mielke left the meeting at 7:26 pm

**Membership Retention/Attraction:** Gary Hendrickson: Not present. Gary did report that not many folks attend multiple meets.

**Division Meet admission & Swap Table:**

Will have 3 tables at the January 15 Lionel Swap. Will be considering tables for future events. What to charge for Strike's equipment? \$5 for kits, \$6 for Blue Box Athearn, \$7 for Bev Bel, \$8 for AcuRail, and \$9 for Atlas.

**Contests:** In December, we had 4 entries, and were all lumped together for one general category. No updates for Dave Nelson (Clinics) or Dave Poquette (AP Achievement)  
Burnell talked to John Hagen on getting the Division's layout info binder back **Mad City Show:** We should put out flyers in the membership area, and maybe a small static display.

**2023-2024 schedule:**

Piggyback on to Lionel Swap dates for next season? Train School? Go somewhere else in the Division? Look into East Troy for meet location? West Bend? At East Troy we could tour the car barn, have a wrist band, hold in March or April.

**Life Member review:** Most of the folks are correct. Looking for folks that have passed away, but HQ may not be not aware of. The data looks ok.

**Constitution & By-Laws:** Reviewed the documents we last edited. We will ask the MWR (Mid-West Region) to bless them, and make the division active again at end of 2023/2024 season. Plan for an election in spring of 2024. The question comes to who else will step forward to run for the positions (Super & Asst Super)

**Other items:**

Dave Swanson needs to cash the check for tickets that the division purchased advanced half priced Trainfest tickets, \$340.

**Next Meeting:**

Scheduled for Wednesday February 8, 2023 at 7 pm at the Lionel Railroad Club in New Berlin. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by David A. Rohr, Chief Clerk.

Saturday, April 1, 2023



VFW POST 1197  
 645 S River Street/Illinois Route 25  
 Batavia, Illinois  
 Along the Historic CA&E Batavia Branch Right of Way

Doors Open 9:00AM



**A Day for the Archives**

**Affiliated Sponsors BRHS, CNWHS, GNRHS, LAKE STATES, MRHA, SHORE LINE, SLHTS**

**A Weekend to Benefit Multiple Archive Efforts**

Collectively, all the participating groups archive efforts will benefit from this event, both financially and in collective knowledge.

Great presentations, networking and archive updates from participating organizations.

9:00 10:00 am – Registration

**Schedule of Presentations**

10 am – Bob Hanmer MRHS, GNRHS, NPRHA

“Train Communications in the 1940’s” Early use of radio in train service

11 am Sara Phalen – West Chicago City Museum

“Junction The Town Railroads Built ”

**11:30 am to 1 pm Lunch Provided**

1 pm – Jeff Eggert/Craig Pfannkuche – CNWHS

“DSLR Digitizing, Genealogical Research and New Building Update”

2 pm – Digital Programs by Paul Swanson – Lake States

“The Streets of Michigan City”, “Enchantments Final Chapter - Amtrak Semaphore Action”, and

“Chicago Union Station” Created by Larry Sallee and Mel Patrick

3 pm – “A Tribute to Jim Boyd” Created by Mike Schafer and Craig Willett

3:30 pm to 4:30 pm – Open for society shorts/socializing/networking etc.

4:30 pm – Pullman Library IRM – Jon Habegger

5 pm – Walter Keevil Shore Line

“Movies from the Keevil Archive Collection”

**5:30 pm – Buffet Dinner**

6:30 pm – “Land of the Burlingtons” David Wilson – BRHS

7 pm – “The GM&O Story” NWI Chapter NRHS

7:30 pm – Jerry Pyfer – “In Dreams” A Milwaukee Road Story



**Full Fare Includes:** Presentations, Lunches, Buffet Dinner and Friday Rail Event **\$160.00#**  
 #of which \$100 is tax deductible

**Admission To Day Presentations Only** Including Lunch **\*\$110.00@**  
 @of which \$80 is fully tax deductible

**Evening Presentations and Dinner (after 5 pm) \*\$60.00**

**Friday Only Rail Fare, Including Lunch \*\$75.00**

**Limited Archive/Society Company Stores will be on site during this event.**

*A room block has been arranged for those traveling from out of town at:*

**Comfort Inn & Suites**

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\$109.99 Double Occupancy, use code ARCHIVES